

arts:design collaboration in Waitakere City    the heART of this place





This booklet has been funded by Creative New Zealand. It accompanies the video of the same name. Both the booklet and video can be obtained from Waitakere City Council 09 836 8000 extn 8780. Writing and Research: Naomi McCleary and Rose Yukich Design and Print: Helio Graphics Printed: on Chlorine Free paper with vegetable based inks Front and Back Cover: Rewarewa Footbridge, photo by Joseph Cameron, Creative Marketing © Waitakere City Council March 2002



Art is not escapism, but a discovery, and its abundance and accessibility are factors in determining our quality of life. And it is to maintain this that governments are created and on this basis that governments are judged.

Matthew Fox/Theologian

HEREANDNOW

collā'bor|āte *v.i.* work jointly esp. at literary or artistic production

Waitakere City Council is bringing together professionals from both the arts and design worlds to create its public spaces and buildings. This collaborative practice gives artists partnership status with urban planners, architects, landscape designers and engineers. It has developed alongside the City's holistic approach to town centre design, which places a high value on the cultural and social needs of local communities as well as sustainable building solutions.

The Council now requires that a 'lead artist' be contracted onto the design team at the very beginning of all new building projects. As a result artists are having a major impact on the actual form of public facilities and open spaces. And the collaboration does not end there. A lead artist works with the architect and the Council's arts administrators to define, at an early stage, where relevant arts projects can be integrated into a facility. To carry out these projects, the Council then commissions artists whose work is seen as appropriate to each particular site.

This booklet tells the story of how Waitakere City Council came to embrace the process of arts:design collaboration. It also includes examples of completed projects which demonstrate that such a collaboration can be more than an ideal; that it can shape the life and heart of a city.

NOW

ANEWCITY~ANEWVISION

Waitakere City was formed in 1989 when the boroughs of New Lynn, Glen Eden and Henderson amalgamated with Waitemata City. Its first arts policy was written in 1991. An arts administrator and community arts co-ordinator were appointed in 1993 and 1994 respectively.

With some community consultation and the support of key managers at Council, the arts staff conceived a vision for the new City that celebrated its past and its hopes for the future through partnerships between artists and designers. Such partnerships had the potential to create vibrant public spaces relevant to the growing City's identity. Actively promoting this vision was Mayor Bob Harvey, who became a powerful voice on Council and in the wider community for the transforming power of the arts.

The vision was shaped by a set of distinct needs and desires:

- + the need to build on the already strong arts and cultural heritage of the Waitakere area
- + the need to create strong urban centres from the disparate town centres that had been brought together by amalgamation
- + the need to create meaningful public space for the City's fast growing population and the accompanying medium density housing around public transport hubs
- + the desire to stamp the urban landscape with a truly 'pacific' style
- + a commitment to marking significant sites with art from local iwi
- + the desire to tie any arts practice into "sustainability" - one of the new City's guiding principles (in 1993 Waitakere City declared itself an EcoCity, the first in NZ).

I'd like art to be fully integrated into the City's fabric so that people come to accept and expect it. Sport is a given - you wouldn't design a city without playing fields or parks, why shouldn't it be the same for art?

Naomi McCleary Arts Advisor/Waitakere City Council

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ARTIST: DEBRA BUSTIN



MOA MOUNTAIN



ARTIST: PHILL ROOKE



ă'dvocate *n.* one who speaks in favour of

ă'dvocate *v.t.* defend; recommend, support

The notion that art and culture are an integral part of a healthy society has not, traditionally, been deeply felt or widely supported in New Zealand. For Waitakere City to turn its arts vision into a reality, it became crucial to inspire and convince the complex, intersecting groups that make up a city. This "advocacy" process had to be ongoing and consistent, and reach all the following:

- + the politicians within Council and outside
- + the Council administration
- + iwi
- + artists and arts organisations
- + design professionals
- + other cultural groups; and
- + the private sector.

Initially the people advocating for the role of artists were the arts staff, the Mayor and a few members of the City's administration. They could not change hearts and minds overnight. As well as 'talking up' the idea, they had to create opportunities for these groups to realise the potential benefits of arts:design collaboration. The opportunities came in the form of the key events and projects described overleaf.

ADVOCACY

ADVOCACY IN ACTION

ONE-DAY SEMINAR ON 'SUSTAINABILITY AND THE ARTS' 1994

at which artists came together to discuss the role they could play in bringing to life the difficult concept of sustainability. They were challenged by Tony Watkins from The University of Auckland's School of Architecture, to become visionaries in creating and designing their city; to have confidence in their ability *"to see the potential, to hold the past and to protect the future"*.

ECO-ART SCULPTURE SYMPOSIUM Summer 1994/1995

at which artists created works that demonstrated the principles of sustainability and environmental protection. Following this symposium a wave of new work based on the same themes began to appear as artists, inspired into action, came out of the studio into the community. To catch this wave Waitakere City undertook a series of community participation projects in parks. Two of the most successful were: the **Bullocks** and the **Taniwha of a Thousand Hands**. Industrial waste made up the raw material for these sculptures. Community involvement was actively encouraged, and time allowed for this to evolve. However, strong and competent professional artists managed the process to ensure that the completed works were robust and attractive.

These events marked a shift in perception for the Council staff and politicians, who began to see the value of the artist as a collaborator in designing a sustainable city. But their understanding of the full potential of such a relationship was yet to blossom. Two further events signalled a major turning point for the advocacy process: the completion of the **Rewarewa Footbridge** and the **Sites Pacific Symposium**.

lānd'mark *n.* object or event or change marking stage in process or turning point in history

ARTIST: STUART SLATER



ARTIST: DEBRA BUSTIN



THE REWAREWA FOOTBRIDGE

The Rewarewa Footbridge 1996/1997

Hugh Brown Drive, New Lynn

Architects: John Anderson and Mike King of City Design

Artist: Virginia King

Engineer: Andrew Jackson of Global Engineering Products Ltd

One of the things about working collaboratively is that artists have to let go of their own ego, and often part of the concept has to be adapted for the process.

Virginia King/Artist

The Rewarewa Footbridge in New Lynn was the first major arts:design collaboration undertaken in the City. The Council contracted City Design with artist Virginia King to design a bridge to replace one that was small, low-lying and unsafe. The brief stated: *"The footbridge is to be an artistic statement, a sculptural form which relates to the environment. Waitakere City has a well-developed partnership with the arts and would expect to see these talents integrated into the project."*

And so began the City's first official 'experiment' in arts:design collaboration. King researched and developed design drawings and concepts. Her research focused on the Rewarewa Creek and the associated cultural and heritage issues - the rewarewa tree motifs of seed-pod, flower and the incandescent qualities of the wood as a source of lighting for pre-European Maori.

The experience was an intense learning curve for all involved as artist, architects, engineers, steel fabricators and other site contractors came to



terms with the demands of working in partnership. The Council's arts administrator acted as an advocate/broker, helping resolve any breakdowns in communication. That the project was completed to such a high standard, within budget and on time, is a testament to all involved. That the structural contractors involved went from cynicism to open expressions of joy and satisfaction at the completion of the bridge is also one of the unseen triumphs of the project.

For the supporters of the collaborative arts:design process, the Rewarewa Footbridge was an important landmark:

- + it proved to Council that artists can be thoroughly professional in major collaborative projects
- + it raised the profile of artists to a wide group of project management staff and contractors
- + it showed the value of providing the politicians and the administration with visible evidence of arts:design collaboration in action; and
- + it highlighted the importance of having those few advocating Council voices in the background, quietly driving the project through to its successful completion.

This award-winning bridge is now regarded by the City and by Council as a jewel in its crown. It is well used and is the pride of the local community who now have, not only a pedestrian access to their local town centre, but an inspiring work of art.

Awards: Judges citation in the inaugural Creative Places Awards 1999
NZIA Resene Architecture Award, Regional Section 2000



SITESPACIFICSYMPOSIUM

Sites Pacific Symposium 1998

For all organisations, including councils, who influence the way we live as social beings, and the physical world that we live in, it is important that they incorporate the creative perspective.

Caroline Robinson/Artist

Jointly organised by the Waitakere City Council and Creative New Zealand, this symposium explored through dialogue and presentation the concept of the arts:design process, and attracted an audience from around the country. The conference's workshop programme teamed up artists, architects, engineers, landscape architects and urban planners. Together they worked for six weeks on theoretical projects for re-designing specific public sites around the City.

Hard on the heels of the Rewarewa Footbridge, the Sites Pacific Symposium had a significant impact on the administration in Waitakere City Council. It gave professional validation to the philosophy of arts:design collaboration and led to the Council including arts criteria into the tender documents for all its major facilities and a place for artists in project teams. These criteria create an automatic partnership between the 'lead artist' and other design professionals. There has been a spill over ever since of new projects that are transforming public space and buildings around the city.

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THE VISION REALISED

We have a very definite arts vision - it's a celebration of who we are and what we are. Waitakere City is a model of how to interact with artists, how to applaud them, how to grow their talent.

Mayor Bob Harvey/Waitakere City

Waitakere City is now enjoying the gift of the extraordinary that comes from the unique eye of the artist. This is aptly demonstrated by the new Aquatic Centre currently under construction. Lead artist Virginia King's collaboration with architects John Fraser and Bob Allen (Creative Spaces Ltd) has had a profound effect on the design process and the interior of the building:

"We agreed that Virginia's input would be one not of applied art, but instead be interwoven with the architecture, so that it became part of the entire design package. It is a time-consuming process because of the incorporation of somebody else's ideas, and the constant challenging of each other's ideas, but I think it has been very worthwhile".

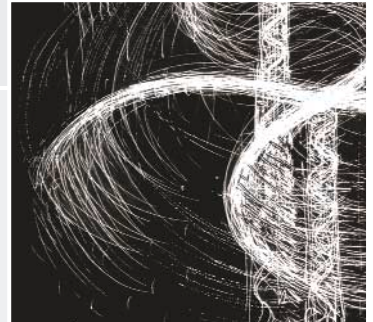
John Fraser/Architect

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COMPROMISE AND BALANCE

While there is no doubt that the results of this collaborative practice are very exciting, the process is always challenging. It requires:

- + a willingness to compromise from all parties
- + ongoing brokering from core arts staff within the Council, or people who understand the arts:design process
- + an acceptance of shared ownership (this can be a struggle for creative people - traditionally architects and artists expect to have sole ownership of their finished work); and



CONCEPT DRAWINGS/AQUATIC CENTRE BY VIRGINIA KING

- + ongoing advocacy to the Council administration and politicians as new people come into the system.

On the job it can also be challenging to strike a balance between the demands and realities of the business and artistic worlds:

“Design professionals in a commercial environment have to place a value on their work and time in dollar terms, and that comes back ultimately to hourly rates. They will ascribe a certain amount of time to a project, whereas the artist never or very rarely does that. Instead, he or she works until they attain perfection, or near as they can to perfection. These two modes have to be synchronised, so that you don’t end up with design professionals having to put in so much extra time into a collaborative project that the economic realities get lost. It’s a process that has to be constantly monitored, adjusted and developed to create some sort of balance for both sides. Sometimes we have only achieved this by making mistakes and learning for the next project.”

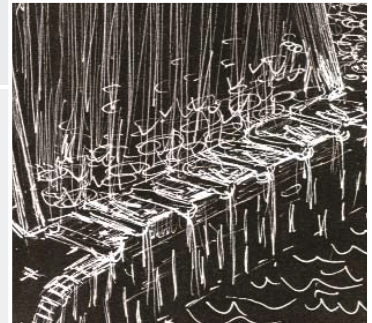
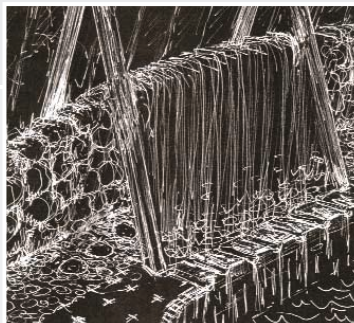
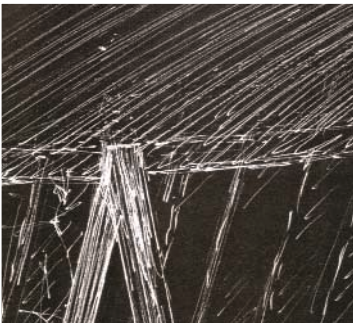
Naomi McCleary/Arts Advisor/Waitakere City

PAPER WORK AND BUDGETS

To secure this collaborative practice the Council has evolved administrative frameworks and systems. Clear criteria now exist for arts collaboration within tender documents for design development. Specific contract templates for artists conform to copyright law but spell out, define and protect the moral rights of artists.

We live in a risk averse society so it is vital that arts briefs clearly identify:

- + legal requirements around issues of safety, e.g. avoidance of sharp or protruding materials, climbing hazards etc; and
- + standards for use of materials, covering robustness, graffiti guarding and maintenance requirements.



While it is often difficult for local authorities to find large arts budgets, it is possible, with careful planning, to incorporate art into construction budgets. Money that is already set aside for floors, lighting, acoustics, furniture and other basic elements, can provide seeding finance for shaping mundane and functional items into works of arts. The “top-up” budgets required to complete such integrated arts:design projects are modest by comparison and can be managed from either internal arts budgets or external funding sources.

REWARDS FOR THE CITY

Employing artists to participate in the creation of public spaces has benefited Waitakere City in many ways:

In the Public Arena

- + unique public buildings and open spaces, where, even in low-budget developments, the result of combining creative architecture and artwork is dramatic
- + a growing number of integrated and site relevant artworks in parks and urban spaces
- + a significant impact on the City's arts economy, providing work for artists and promoting them to a wider audience
- + a contribution to the development of cultural tourism with public art becoming a drawcard alongside the City's galleries, artists studios, wineries and wilderness areas
- + a positive response from the City's diverse local communities who have participated in many arts projects and are becoming increasingly at ease with “art in this place”

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ARTIST: JACOB MANU SCOTT



ECO-ARTS SYMPOSIUM 1994/95

ARTIST: ALBERT MCCARTHY



ARTIST: VIRGINIA KING



- + an impetus for arts practitioners to extend their professional skills as a result of the challenge of working collaboratively and on large scale projects

Within the Council Organisation

- + an acknowledgement of artists as professionals. All artists who take part on design teams are paid a professional hourly rate for consultation work. This is outside any commission for specific artwork.
- + a committed practice of including arts criteria in all Council tender documents for new developments
- + integration and co-operation across Council when designing new facilities, e.g. Parks, Planning, Leisure, Project Management, Service Delivery, EcoWater and Public Affairs (Arts Team)
- + increasing support for arts projects and programmes from elected councillors and the Council administration as each successful project reinforces the value to the community of an arts rich environment; and
- + the completion of a new arts policy which incorporates the current arts:design practices.

Each project has marked another step on the way to an embedded role for the arts in City planning and development. Each step has shown that arts:design collaboration can produce public space that is beautiful, out-of-the-ordinary, and revealing of history and local identity. What follows is a brief overview of completed arts:design projects to date in Waitakere City.

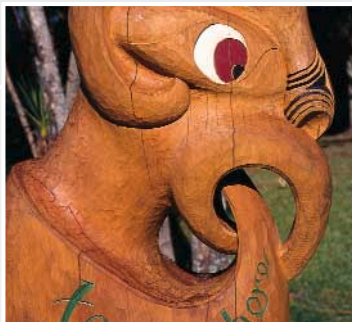
Art would be richer, and more satisfying to people, if it was integrated into their lives, rather than being set upon a far-off pedestal.

John Dewey/Philosopher

ARTIST: HEIDI MARDON



TE KAWERAU A MAKI



NEWLYNNCOMMUNITYCENTRE

New Lynn Community Centre

Totara Avenue, New Lynn

Architects: Malcolm Bowes and Patrick Clifford of Architectus Bowes Clifford Thomson Ltd

Lead Artist: Neil Miller

Year: 2001

One of the things I have taken from this project is a great sense of being valued by my community through the City Council. An arts collaboration with a client such as the Council, who are working on behalf of the community, helps artists make their work fit better into the surroundings. You come up with something that is not an add-on after the event. It doesn't just descend on the site, it's more thoughtful.

Neil Miller/Artist

The New Lynn Community Centre is the first large new facility in Waitakere to have a fully integrated arts:design thread woven into its development. Lead artist Neil Miller worked with Architectus from the concept stage, identified potential arts sites and contributed to the image of a 'curved spine' cradling the building. A group of artists were then invited to respond to the proposed building, sited in an intensely urban environment between a busy road and a railway line. This part of the project brought the architects together with artists whose work reflected a similar late modernist style; a combination which Miller describes as "unique and extraordinary". A series of seven commissioned artworks now appear in and outside the building resonating with the clean lines of the award-winning architecture and adding warmth and local meaning to the space.

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ARTIST: BARBARA GRACE



ARTIST: PAUL HARTIGAN



ARTIST: JUDY MILLAR



Paul Hartigan's *Signal-Echo* Neon installation was initially inspired by the history of "light signals" emanating from radio towers and communication beacons in the Waitakere area. Neil Miller's *Signal Sculpture* is a visual palisade running along the railway side of the building and emphasises the idea of the Community Centre as a "station", a place of meeting and movement. The weaving line patterns in Judy Millar's linoleum floor design makes reference to the many cultures and community groups who will use the building; while the effects on natural light created by Esther Leigh's light boxes provide a subtle ever-changing background to activities in the main hall.

Barbara Grace's wall mural on the second floor is a pictorial documentation of people from the local area, capturing "frozen moments" of New Lynn history. Allan McDonald's *Proof Only*, a video projection work merging images of past and present, is viewed from the street by night. Standing sentinel at the entrance is a six-metre high sculpture, *Way Finder*, created by Caroline Robinson with the community. Simultaneously evoking a waka and the rewarewa seed pod, it carries at its heart coiled metal scrolls bearing the messages of dozens of local residents.

NZIA Resene Architecture Award in the Community and Cultural Category
and Special Jury Award for Local Body Initiative in Architecture 2001

NEWLYNN

ARTIST: NEIL MILLER



ARTIST: CAROLINE ROBINSON



MCLEOD'S CROSSING

McLeod's Crossing

Falls Park, Henderson

Architect: Richard O'Neill of O'Neill Architects Ltd

Artist: John Edgar

Engineer: Nick Covich of Mitchell-Vranjes Consulting Engineers Ltd

Year: 2000

The collaborative process allows artists to express their dreams and their visions which is what art is about. Sometimes you just need practical people to make that happen...on a big project like this you really need an engineer...we achieved great things but only because the engineer and the architect were there to assist.

John Edgar/Artist

The Council identified a need for a bridge over the Oratia Stream to connect two reserves on the edge of the Henderson township. The desire was for an attractive, site relevant, safe and visible walkway that revealed the qualities of the site and the historical precinct of the stream and nearby heritage buildings.

The artist, John Edgar, was contracted as an equal partner in the design development. The working relationship was greatly eased by the generosity of the architect, Richard O'Neill, who saw himself as the translator of the artist's vision; there simply to aid interpretation and create architectural form. Edgar's concept for the bridge is based on the kauri forest which once covered the area and the probability that crossings, both by Maori and early settlers, were made over fallen logs. The bridge springs up from the approach and throws a muscular and golden span across the stream. For locals and visitors it is not just a passageway but a destination.

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MASSEY LIBRARY AND LEISURE CENTRE

Massey Library and Leisure Centre

Corner Westgate Drive and Don Buck Road, Massey

Architect: Phillip Howard of Dodd Paterson Bukowski Rehm Architects

Lead Artist: Kate Wells

Year: 2001

I have been very keen for some time to cross some of those art/architecture/administration boundaries. The key things I have learnt with Massey are the importance of collaboration and communication on a myriad of levels - from dealing with aspects of design and production to areas of finances, politics, and the local community. Although there have been hiccups along the way, it has been a great opportunity and experience.

Kate Wells/Artist

Massey's colourful and interesting past is being re-discovered and honoured in a community building where architecture and art reflect the history and people of the area. The Massey Leisure Centre - combining library, CAB, indoor sports facilities and meeting rooms - is the most arts rich public facility in the City to come out of the collaborative process to date. Stage One of the project, which included the sports and recreational facilities, was completed in 1999. It contains some fine, integrated artwork, but the framework for a full arts:design collaboration was not in place until Stage Two began, and lead artist Kate Wells was appointed.

Wells' contribution to the design of the complex, both inside and out, has been crucial. Her research into Massey's past and present, helped identify



ARTIST: KATE WELLS



ARTIST: GRAEME GASH

relevant themes and materials, which influenced the building design and the arts projects. Her stamp can also be seen in the choice of textural surfaces and colours inside the Centre. The end result is a striking building enhanced with artworks ranging from the fully functional to the richly decorative.

The arts projects contained within the total complex are:

- + Entry Carving *Te Hononga Tangata* Sunnah Thompson (Matariki Carvers)
- + Entry Sculpture *Ole Alia* Fatu Feu'u
- + Carved Pole Forest Massey High School Students
- + Signage Sculptures Jeff Thomson
- + Directional Gecko Mosaics Jon Morgan
- + Children's Play Sculpture *Moa Mountain*
Design by Kate Wells and Renee Lambert
Construction by Iona Matheson and Jasmine Clark
- + Metaphorical Landscape Allie Eagle
- + Library Entrances Graeme Gash
- + Carpets Kate Wells and Dilana Rugs
- + Shelving Canopy and Stack Ends Neal Smith
- + Door Handles and Hand Rails Matthew von Sturmer & Zealous Design
- + Clock Phill Rooke
- + Palm Mosaic Kate Wells and Gabrielle Hoffman
- + Tukutuku Panels and Poupou Leonard Tino and Hohepa Renata
- + Reference and Children's Desk Graphics Designed by Hohepa Renata
- + *The Ballad of Don Buck's Hill* Written by Marianne Simpkins and
Printed by Beth Serjeant.



Photography:

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Page 5 photos 1 and 3 Haru Sameshima, photo 2 Virginia King Page 6 photo 1 Joseph Cameron, photo 3 Haru Sameshima Page 10 photos 1, 2 and 3 Glenn Jowitt Page 11 photos 1, 2 and 3 Glenn Jowitt Page 12 photo 2 Mark Smith Page 13 photo 1 Mark Smith Page 14 photos 1, 2 and 3 Mark Smith.
All other photos sourced from Waitakere City Council.

